

## You've got a (true or false) message

When I was young and I was studying English, one of my favorite exercises was the "True or False". Finding out if the information presented was real or not was something that I loved. I had to check what was presented, the context etc. Although I don't take English classes anymore, I have the feeling I'm doing this exercises everyday.

If I could rank the words and expressions I have been reading or hearing the most lately, "fake news" would be number one. False information has always been present in my life and I'm sure the same thing happens to everyone. However, this became a bigger problem lately due to technology - more specifically social media and messaging apps that allows information to "travel" faster.

Although tech companies and governments have been trying to end the propagation of these news, they haven't been able to do anything effective. This means people need to take this responsibility, too. In my case, I can thank my Public Relations background as dealing with information (true or false) was my routine and I learned how to avoid fake news. Nowadays, although I don't work directly with communications anymore, I use this background to help my community and clients to stay well-informed and away from fake news. I see this as part of my role as a citizen. This is not an easy task, but I use those questions to help:

- Where did I get the information from?
- Is the source reliable?
- Can another reliable source confirm the information?
- Are there videos or photos confirming the information?
- Has the information being checked by any fact-checking site?

If the answer for any of these questions is "no", don't share the information and ask them to the person who has sent you the news. It's also important to say that whoever spreads fake information can be prosecuted since it can damage people's lives and companies' reputation.

I know that answering all these questions can be hard, especially if we read or hear something that arises intense emotions. If this happens to you, take a deep breath and answer the questions. If you still can't do this, ignore the message and focus on something important, like your work, your family or your community, something that will really bring you a benefit.





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